



Newsletter

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Dear Reader,

In a single week it will be Christmas. For Christian Arabs this is a great celebration. Who are they actually, Christian Arabs? In this newsletter we would like to tell you more about this population in Israel. In continuation of the previous newsletter, you will read more about the activities the foundation has worked out with Nes Ammin. And other news to keep you informed of the work of the foundation. We hope you enjoy reading and wish you a blessed Christmas!

Christian Arabs

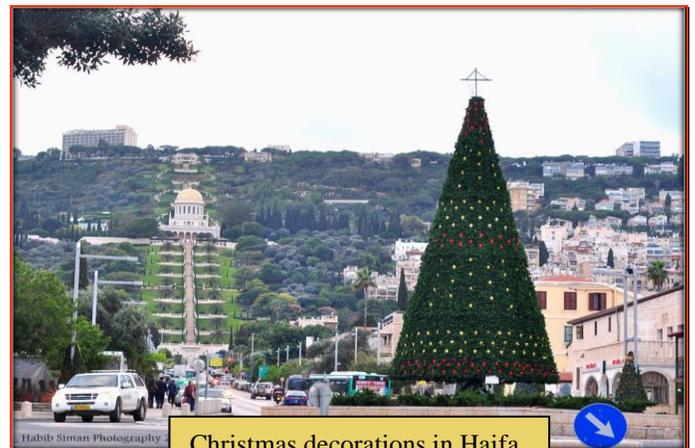
As a foundation, we want to support Christian Arabs in Israel. We are doing this practically by helping the Christian School of the Sisters of Nazareth to achieve their construction project. In this regard, we are excited to tell you something more about Christian Arabs.

It is remarkable that there is so much emphasis put on a person's background in Israel on a daily basis. Are you Muslim, Jew or Christian? It is normal to be categorized in this way. Family and social contacts are important, people think in terms of "we." In contrast to the west, which places much more emphasis on the individual, where 'I' is central. This idea also plays a role in religious views. Even if you're not a practicing believer, you belong to a certain group because your roots lie there.

Of Israel's total population only about 2% are Christian. Of this, 80% are Arabic. Of the Arabs living in Israel, about 20% **of the total population**, 9% are Christian. The others are Muslim, Druze and Bedouin.

It is stated that Christian Arabs were part of the early Christian communities. This comes from the Bible reference in Acts 2:11 which says that Arabs were present at Pentecost in Jerusalem.

A large number of Christian Arabs live in the Galilee (northern Israel), in cities such as Haifa and Nazareth. Christian Arabs are part of various denominations. To name a few: Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Roman or Latin Catholic, Coptic, Anglican and Baptist.



Christmas decorations in Haifa

Christian Arabs mainly belong to the traditional Catholic or Orthodox churches. Less known are the small evangelical churches. Members of evangelical churches are usually raised in more traditional churches. They speak with respect about the traditional churches even though they have different theological views.

There are many church denominations and many differences. Despite the differences, there are examples of cooperation and respect between churches. A good

example is the church calendar. In Israel there are two different calendars for the ecclesiastical year: one for the western-orientated churches and the one for the eastern-oriented churches. Therefore, Christmas is celebrated by one church on December 24th and 25th and by the other church on January 6th and 7th. In order to form greater unity, churches in Haifa and Nazareth have agreed to celebrate Christmas according to the western calendar and Easter according to the eastern calendar.

Another example can be seen at the Sisters of Nazareth School. Originating from the Roman Catholic Church, students from all Christian churches are welcome. And every Sunday a local Baptist church, that has no building, has its service in the school.

Of course, this is limited information about Christian Arabs. Do you want to know more? Mark your calendar for **Thursday, May 22, 2014!** We want to invite you to come for our theme night (in The Netherlands) about Christian Arabs. More information will be forthcoming.

Around the kindergarten

During the coming winter season all kind of activities will be organized in the kindergarten. Of course, Christmas is celebrated and there are also the Christmas holidays. This is a period in which family and friends love to visit each other and spend time together.



Winter is the season when rain is expected. It is cold and wet. Buildings in Israel are poorly isolated, often making it colder inside than outside. That is certainly the case with the kindergarten building. The kindergarten was originally built in 1860. In the course of time, classrooms

have been added, but it is still a small area to house nearly 300 children. Therefore, the children like to play outside. In the rainy season this can cause problems. The school is located on a mountainside where large amounts of rainwater flow down the mountain. Getting rid of this water is difficult. Frequently the playground is overflowing with water and the children cannot go outside. With a new building, these will be problems of the past!



Unfortunately it is not that far yet. The building plans are ready and the building permit is expected to be issued in the spring of 2014. To prepare, they will start cleaning up the site. Once the building permit is in, they will begin the first phase of construction. It is not unusual, in Israel, to start building before the total amount of money has been collected. So the building will go up in stages. This also applies to the construction project of the school. And at this point, there is still not enough money to build a new preschool building.

Would you like to help the preschoolers by making a donation?

Nes Ammim

In the last newsletter we wrote about the connections our foundation has with Nes Ammim.

In the spring of 2013, we received an invitation to the 50th anniversary celebration of Nes Ammim. Nes Ammim invited people from home and abroad to the festival. As a foundation, we were able to sell items. A

Christian painter from Haifa, Kamil Dow, allowed us to sell his beautiful cards. The proceeds from this sale will benefit the new development of the school in Haifa. It was also a great opportunity to provide information about the work of the foundation.



Promoting foundation during anniversary Nes Ammim

Employees of Nes Ammim will pay a visit to the school in Haifa this school year. It is part of the student's curriculum to do volunteer work, for a few hours. Students volunteer both at school and on their own time. Thus, the students learn the value of doing for others. The volunteers at Nes Ammim know this better than anyone. Therefore, Nes Ammim's will give a guest lecture at the school on their own motivations for living and working in a foreign country for a shorter or longer period of time, and what this means for them. We are curious as to how the students will react!

Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for people who are willing to give some of their free time to lend a hand to the foundation. The main task is to represent the foundation at various activities in The Netherlands.

Would you like to be involved with Christian Arabs, and want to do something to help? Please contact us! Please email us at info@vriendenvanhaifa.nl

Thanks!

We would like to give a special word of thanks to Lennert Kraak. He put a lot of energy into designing a brochure for the foundation. He did this with a lot of enthusiasm, and the result is something to be proud of! At this time the brochure is at the printer. It will be used for fund-raising activities for the foundation. You can already see the flyer in the attachment to this newsletter!

Center for Israel Studies (CIS)

The Foundation has made contact with the Center for Israel Studies (CIS). The CIS is located in Ede at the Christian University of Ede. Simply put, the goal of the CIS is to learn about the Jewish people. Therefore, the CIS has sent an employee, Rev. Aart Brons, to Israel. Rev. Aart Brons lives and works in Jerusalem. The CIS does not want to ignore any of the Christian population in Israel, and for that reason has made several contacts with the Christian-Arab population. At the invitation of the Foundation, Rev. Aart Brons and Dr. Michael Mulder, Director of the CIS, visited the Sisters of Nazareth School. They spoke with the head of the school, Sister Joanna Filip, and were given a tour of the school.



From left to right: Sister Joanna Filip, Rev. Aart Brons, Dr. Michael Mulder

During this visit, there was talk about exchange opportunities, because of the ties that the CIS has with the Christian University of Ede (CHE). For CHE students interested in an international internship, there are opportunities at the Sisters of Nazareth School.

Finally

Thank you for the gifts and donations we have already received. We hope you will continue to support us!

Want to become a donor? Please contact us at:
info@vriendenvanhaifa.nl to make a donation.

Our account number is: **16.36.48.980** t.n.v. Vrienden van de Sisters of Nazareth-Haifa te Amersfoort.
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Thank You for your support!